

Isham Blake, Sr. (1766-1836) P-115919

Submitted by Gilbert A. Smith, Jr. NSSAR 184627

Isham Blake Sr. was born on June 21, 1766 in Southampton, Roanoke County, Virginia. He enlisted in the Continental Army at a young age and served in the fifer and bugle corp. during the battles of Brandywine and Yorktown.

During the battle of Brandywine in 1777, Isham served as a fifer under General George Washington, when the American's were defeated on September 11, 1777 by General Sir William Howe. After that battle, Isham continued to serve in the fifer and bugle corp. in the Continental Army throughout the war and later as a foot soldier. In summer of 1781, Isham was serving under French General Gilbert du Motiers Marquis de LaFayette when General Washington sent General LaFayette to Virginia with American troops to stop British raids along the James River. Isham was now fifteen years old. During the battles leading to the Battle of Yorktown, in addition to serving as a fifer, he also served as a bodyguard for General LaFayette. On October 19, 1781, Isham witnessed the surrender of the British at Yorktown, Virginia by General Charles Cornwallis to General Washington. He served for several more years and upon his discharge from the Army, he had earned the rank of Captain.

Eventually, Isham Blake Sr. and his wife, Mary Macy Clifton Blake moved to Orange County, North Carolina and then to Fayetteville, North Carolina. They were members of Hay Street Methodist church in Fayetteville, where Isham also served on the ruling board. Isham and Mary had eight children including Martha "Patsy" Blake, Miles Blake, Edmund Blake, Elizabeth Blake, Thomas Clifton Blake, Sarah (Sallie) Blake, Mary Macy Blake and Isham Blake, Jr.

Isham and Mary's daughter, Martha married William Flack. William and Martha Flack's daughter, Mary Macy Flack married John Duncan Starr. John and Mary Starr's daughter, Mary Flack Starr married John Henry Cook. John and Mary Cook's daughter, Lilla Cook married Dr. Chesterfield Harvey Smith. Chesterfield and Lilla Smith's son, Cook Hall Smith married Grace Mozelle Gilbert. Cook and Grace Smith's son, Gilbert Alexander Smith married Alpha Katherine Shuler. Gilbert and Alpha's son, Gilbert A. Smith, Jr. married Anita Barry.

In 1825, during a special visit to Fayetteville by General Lafayette, Isham served as a member of the honor guard (composed of Revolutionary War veterans) escorting the General into town. On the morning of his second day in Fayetteville, General LaFayette was informed that an old comrade from his Revolutionary War days had come and wished to see him. An emotional reunion ensued. Recognizing each other after so many years, the two men embraced, and talked long of many memories of their service together at Brandywine and Yorktown.

It is said that Isham had the curious habit of softly whistling under his breath. He died on February 29, 1836 in Fayetteville, Cumberland County, North Carolina. Isham and Mary Macy are both buried in Cross Creek Cemetery #1 in Fayetteville, NC.

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Saramana Chapter

Florida Society